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SUBJECT: BRAZIL: UPDATE ON EFFORTS AND FUTURE PLANS IN HAITI

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CLASSIFIED BY: Lisa Kubiske, DCM, State; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Brazilian Foreign Ministry (Itamaraty) officials coordinating Brazil's post-earthquake assistance to Haiti listed for PolOffs Brazil's humanitarian donations, gave an update on February 8 on the deployment of Brazilian troops to Haiti, and laid out Brazil's plan for transitioning its assistance from emergency relief to reconstruction. Itamaraty officials agreed that U.S. and Brazilian troops in Haiti had formed a strong partnership in their efforts on the ground and are eager to increase the dialog between Brasilia and Washington to map out the next steps of assistance to Haiti. End summary.

BRAZILIAN ASSISTANCE TO HAITI

¶2. (SBU) PolCouns and PolOff met February 8 with Brazilian Ministry of External Relations' (MRE, also called Itamaraty) head of the Department of Central America and the Caribbean Minister Rubens Gama, head of Inter-American Division Carlos Luis Coutinho Perez, and officials from the Department of North American Affairs and the Market Access Division to discuss Brazilian assistance to Haiti. Gama explained that the crisis cabinet created by President Lula following the earthquake in Haiti, under the direction of Institutional Security Office (GSI) Minister General Jorge Felix, continues to coordinate the efforts of all federal agencies involved in providing relief assistance to Haiti. Gama highlighted the Brazilian Air Force's three daily humanitarian flights into Haiti that have allowed Brazil to donate approximately 500 tons of goods, via 70 flights. The donations included 130 tons of medication, and over 1,000 Haitians have been brought to Brazil for assistance (Ref A, B).

¶3. (SBU) The Brazilian military set up a temporary hospital in Haiti that has attended to 3,900 emergency cases, including surgeries. Gama explained that the Brazilian military has plans to keep the hospital running for another two months. Gama confirmed that the 900 troops promised by Brazil would start to make their way to Haiti on February 10; he estimated it would take about 10 days for all of the soldiers to reach Haiti. All of the Brazilian soldiers have previously served in Haiti and therefore know the lay of the land. Gama said Brazil still hopes to send another additional 400 soldiers to Haiti. However, one of the main obstacles is providing the infrastructure all these soldiers will need in Haiti, including shelter, food, and water (Ref. B, C).

LOOKING TO TRANSITION FROM RELIEF TO RECONSTRUCTION

¶4. (C) Gama said that the Brazilian government is now thinking about its future efforts in Haiti, which will be focused on reconstruction. According to Gama, the emergency phase of assistance has now passed and the biggest problem is reconstructing Haiti when it lacks any semblance of the infrastructure needed to execute such efforts. Gama noted that Brazil needs to purchase land for hospitals and buildings and negotiate contracts with the government and private firms, none of which can be done with the current lack of infrastructure in Haiti. Gama also noted that slots for flights into Haiti are still very difficult to obtain and that Brazil needs more than the three flight slots it currently has, especially when flying in government officials who need to evaluate Brazil's efforts in Haiti. (DAO comment: Brazil has cancelled more slots than any other Haiti airport user. DAO assesses that, even if Brazil had more slots per day, it would only have the resources to use only three to four slots per day in a best case scenario. When Brazil flies government officials into

Haiti, it does so on passenger planes that do not carry with them humanitarian assistance. End DAO comment.) Gama said that, for now, the Brazilian government is operating with the knowledge and infrastructure of the Brazilian soldiers in the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) because they had food and assistance distribution methods set up even before the earthquake. Gama stressed that in moving from the relief to the reconstruction phase, the Haitian government needs to provide the international community with its priorities. Following the meeting, Gama confirmed to PolOff that March 31 is Brazil's preferred date for the Haiti donors conference, not only because of conflicts in April, but also because they "think this conference should be held as soon as possible."

¶5. (SBU) Gama confirmed that Brazilian President Lula will be traveling to Haiti on February 25, staying only five hours. Gama speculated that during the short visit Lula will fly in one of the Brazilian helicopters being used for humanitarian assistance in Haiti, visit with Brazilian troops, and have lunch with the Haitian government. Gama noted that Lula already had a trip to the Caribbean planned and that he added Haiti to the plans following the earthquake.

¶6. (SBU) Gama also clarified what has been labeled in the Brazilian press as the Lula government's "Bolsa Haiti." Brasilia has brainstormed and proposed a number of projects to assist Haiti in its reconstruction efforts and the press lumped all of these together and labeled it "Bolsa Haiti" and even "Plano Lula," which he explained was not the government's doing. (Comment: It was actually FM Amorim who, in a press conference, suggested that Haiti need a "Lula Plan," rather than a "Marshall Plan." End comment.) The main concerns driving these proposals are unemployment, lack of security, and infrastructure left by the earthquake. Providing aid does not help Haiti get back on its feet, Gama explained, and Brazil is looking for ways to create work and restart the economy in Haiti. According to Gama, those who left Haiti-including the Haitians and U.N. officials-need to return to rebuild the country. Gama said that Brazil still plans to reduce trade barriers with Haiti to help facilitate the creation of a Haitian economy.

¶7. (SBU) Perez said Brazil believes that the Organization of American States (OAS) mission in Haiti of institutional capacity building is even more important now following the earthquake. He

believed that the OAS will have a greater role in Haiti when the focus turns to long-term planning for the country. Perez admitted that the OAS often suffers from a "deficit of results," which is a problem, and leaves the role of the OAS in Haiti's future to still be shaped.

¶8. (C) Regarding the next day's meeting of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUL) to discuss regional assistance to Haiti, Gama joked that, "we just hope the meeting is not too unruly." He warned that rhetoric is often spouted and inflamed during these meetings but also assured PolOffs that UNASUL has an important role to mobilize political will and public opinion in support of the region's efforts and to maintain the commitment to providing assistance to Haiti. Gama said that Marco Aurelio Garcia had been selected to represent Brazil at the meeting because it was called at the last minute and both Brazilian President Lula and Foreign Minister Amorim had previously scheduled engagements.

BRAZIL UNCLEAR ABOUT MINUSTAH'S FUTURE ROLE

¶9. (SBU) Gama brought up the future role and composition of MINUSTAH as an important issue to be discussed between Brazil, the United States, and the UN. PolCouns noted that Itamaraty Secretary General Antonio Patriota had told the Ambassador just a few days before that Brazil agreed MINUSTAH's mandate should be kept as it

is for now until future needs are clear. Gama said that the Brazilian government is not even sure what it sees as the future of MINUSTAH, but emphasized that the security situation in Haiti must be tackled.

POSITIVE BRAZIL-U.S. PARTNERSHIP IN HAITI

¶10. (SBU) Gama said that the partnership between U.S. and Brazilian troops is working well in Haiti, and that Brasilia and Washington need to increase their level of communication. Both Gama and Perez expressed interest in continuing to share information with us on efforts in Haiti. Gama noted that the times scheduled for conference calls with Washington on Haiti conflict at present with a weekly meeting held by General Felix to coordinate Haiti efforts. Moreover, Under Secretary for Latin America Antonio Simoes would be out of town all of February, and therefore would not be on the calls. The GOB would endeavor to have someone on the call February 11, but Gama also asked about the possibility of rescheduling the calls for a more convenient time.

¶11. (U) Minimize considered.
SHANNON